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MONARCHY AND REPUBLIC IN ITALY.

BY RICCIOTTI GARIBALDI.

THE period that followed the Wars of Liberation found Italian political parties in a very confused state.

The Piedmontese or monarchical elements, by the introduction of a numerous class, whose only aim was to utilize the vast field for jobbery and speculation presented by the creation of a new state, with all its resources still untouched, was gradually being converted into the conservative party of to-day, which still holds in its hands all the great administrative offices of the state and all the royal and political patronage.

The Republican party, that, under Mazzini, had worked such wonders of propagandism, and which had given birth to the party of action represented by the Garibaldians, by its jealousy towards those who constituted the latter, and by its habit of acting and thinking in the spirit of the arrogant pretence that "there is one God, and I am His only prophet," drove most of the leading men of this section of the party into the arms of the monarchy.

The Republican party, thus weakened by the loss of its more active and practical members, between the years 1870 and 1890, was reduced almost to the condition of being merely a political expression.

That portion of it that had accepted the monarchy became the so-called Liberals.

Able as they had proved themselves to be in the patriotic struggle for the liberation of Italy, they were utterly incapable as a governing class, and though they, for a long period, held the reins of government in their hands, yet in reality they were only the puppets of conservative coteries, and now may be said to be disappearing from the political field.

During these years of misgovernment, characterized by the

corruption and speculation of the conservative elements, a steady rising tide of discontent had been created in the public mind, which at last found vent in the appearance of the Socialists and a renewal of activity on the part of the Republicans, though the renewed energy of these last was mostly expended in fighting against the spreading influence of the Socialists, whom they looked upon as interlopers.

The hatred between these two parties has promoted the safety of the monarchy, and would have continued to do so, but for the harsh action of the military tribunals under the last Pelloux Cabinet during the Milan riots—riots that surprised the revolutionary parties as much as the Government itself. This action, being directed against both the Republican and Socialist chiefs, forced them into each others arms.

The consequence was the birth of the league of the popular parties, in which the Socialists, from being purely economic theorists, careless as to what form the government might have, so long as they were allowed freely to ventilate their ideals, became even more anti-monarchical than the Republicans themselves.

In fact, during the late funerals of the dead King, while many Republican members took part in them, the Socialists completely abstained.

The union of these two forces giving a greater probability of success to any revolutionary movement that might take place in Italy, naturally attracted the attention of the great Roman Catholic organization ever hostile to the monarchy, but which, though not officially taking part in the political life of the country, owing to the Papal "*Non expedit*," yet having always indirectly given its support to the conservatives, and fully conscious of the strong anti-clerical feeling existing among the revolutionary parties, had everything to fear (now that foreign interference in favor of the Papacy has become a thing of the past) from a successful revolutionary movement.

Contact between the Reds and the Blacks was impossible as long as the question of the temporal power existed.

But when it was found that the Vatican renounced all pretensions of this kind, in case of a change of form of government in Italy, that it accepted a clear and well defined division between the civil and religious powers under the same conditions, and that in return it only demanded that its Head should be placed beyond

the influence, and no longer be subject to the action, of Italian political parties, by having its position guaranteed by some form of international agreement, the Republican leaders, who more especially represent the Garibaldian programme, acquiesced in a *modus vivendi*, which, while it set their minds at rest as to any danger to the territorial integrity of the country, freed them from the incubus of perpetual priestly encroachment by bringing to their aid all the civil powers of other Catholic countries that suffer from the same affliction.

As a question of practical politics, they asked that priestly influence should no longer be exercised against the Italian aspirations of the *irredenta* provinces, Trent and Triest; and while they did not ask any support for their candidates in the political elections, they required that such support should also be denied to the conservatives.

As a matter of fact, such has been the case. The Catholic clergy on the other side of the Adriatic have ceased, in a great measure, to be so actively aggressive against Italian interests; and in the last general elections the popular parties won many seats on account of the Catholic influence ceasing to support conservative interests.

In this way a future is being prepared which will be beneficial to our country, and which will probably not be without serious influence on the Catholic question all over the world.

Monsignor Ireland, whom I had the pleasure of meeting here in Rome, and who gave me the impression of a man of great capabilities, certainly allowed his American energy to overcome his priestly caution, when he bluntly asked that non-Italian Roman Catholics should have a greater participation in the government of the Church, and that all pretensions to temporal power should be abandoned.

Holy Mother Church does not like to be brusqued in any way, consequently the Monsignor got, to use a popular Roman saying, his head well washed.

But if he had had the inclination, certainly he did not want the opportunity to study the respective positions of the Vatican and the growing anti-monarchical feeling in Italy. He would soon have discovered, as perhaps he did later on (if the interview published in the *New York Herald* towards the end of 1899, between an American journalist and a prelate can be placed to his

account), that the proposed solution of an Italian internal question would result in the very things he asked for.

The raising the Vatican *curia* question to the position of an international understanding would open the door to a much greater participation of non-Italian Roman Catholic influence in the government of the Church, a thing impossible in the present state of affairs, as the Italians could not permit any foreign preponderance in an organization which, in Italy, exists only by permission of the Italian Parliament.

This point was touched in a masterful manner, and with the approval of Italian public opinion, by Crispi, when, on the occasion of the last conclave, the Cardinals proposed holding it out of Italy. He at once intimated that, if such a plan were carried out, the Italian Government would at once occupy the Papal Palaces.

And the question of temporal power would, in this case, also disappear.

The Socialist party is powerful on account of its intense activity and the favor its theories meet with among the lower classes, but it has against it the feeling of repulsion felt by the middle classes.

The Republicans are weakened by the incapacity of their leaders and by their want of party discipline, but they have a good hold, both on the lower and middle classes, and, through their Garibaldian traditions, on the younger portion of the population of the country.

During the last general elections these two parties doubled their numerical strength in the Parliament, and registered about a fifth of the total number of members.

This means that, eliminating the members elected by Government influence, and the large number elected for local, not political reasons, the anti-monarchists are in Parliament of about equal strength with the monarchical conservatives, only that these last appear to be in a majority because they have the support of the local members, who would to-morrow be as good Republicans as to-day they are conservatives.

But it is a curious paradox that the monarchy at present only exists through the non-interference of its bitterest enemies; for, if the Pope to-morrow raised the veto of the "*Non expedit*," the enormous amount of influence brought to bear on the political

elections would at once place the monarchical faction in a hopeless minority.

After the disastrous battle of Adua in Abyssinia, King Humbert is reported to have said: "I have only my army left," and this is pretty nearly the position of the monarchy at present, notwithstanding the wave of sympathy, more dynastic than monarchical, called forth by the atrocious death of that King; for the conservatives have always considered the crown as a useful tool, and when it has attempted to kick against their fetters, they have openly talked of a deposition.

Thus, King Humbert, a man of kindly disposition, but of no strength of will, was gradually reduced to being a mere cypher, and that he foresaw what would be the probable end is proved by the now open secret that he was careful to save out of his Civil List, and place securely in the English three per cents, one hundred millions of francs as a provision for his family against future contingencies.

The execrable assassination of King Humbert has not modified the position much; it has simply produced a suspension of hostilities, the general attitude being one of expectation and observation towards the young King.

"He is an unknown quantity," one of the most knowing political men of Italy said to me a short time ago.

In fact, the monarchical papers have only been able to discover in him two qualities—one, that he has a considerable will of his own, and the other, that he is a distinguished numismatist.

It is certainly a most critical moment in the life of the Italian monarchy.

If Victor Emanuel III. remembers that, if he wears the Iron Crown, it is mainly owing to the popular elements—for history has revealed that the Piedmontese school of diplomats, with Cavour at their head, looked upon the struggle for the liberation and unity of Italy rather as a means of aggrandizing the Piedmontese monarchy than as the realization of a high ideal, the reconstruction of a great nationality, of which, in fact, they were rather afraid—and if he exercises the strength of will he is said to possess to free his crown from the state of bondage in which it was under Humbert, and make it take its true position of mediator between the different political schools, using his influence and royal prerogatives in favor of those classes that most need com-

fort and guidance, the monarchy in Italy may yet have a long lease of life, for patriotism is a strong quality in the Italian heart, and he would find sincere, if unexpected, support from sources now hostile to him and his crown.

But, naturally, his bitterest enemies will then be those who have hitherto used the crown as an instrument to further their own ends, and who, looking upon his childless condition as a danger to the monarchy, do not hide the possibility of his being replaced by some other member of his family.

And it would be a curious thing if the anti-monarchists should one day be obliged to defend the crown, acting on the principle that "a devil you know is always better than one you don't know."

But everything is possible in this country of ours, where, a few months ago, we saw the revolutionary members of Parliament actually defending the Statute of the Kingdom against its natural friends and supporters, the monarchical conservatives.

In fact, the young King at present is like a man on a tight rope; the slightest slip will precipitate matters, and it depends very much on his cool-headedness and nerve whether the monarchy will remain or not what it is at present—graphically described to the writer of the present article by an English statesman, when he said: "We look upon the monarchy in Italy as a house of cards; the first hostile breath of wind will blow it down."

RICCIOTTI GARIBALDI.